

No. 183 December 1991

Chillandale

NEWS





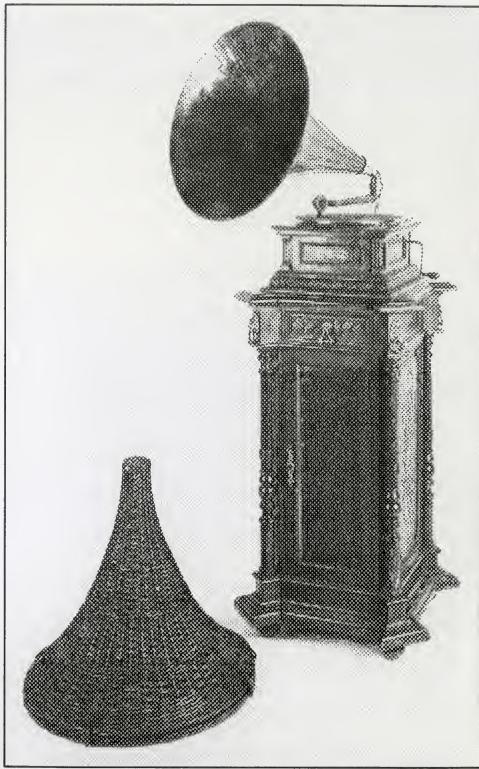
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HILLANDALE NEWS

The Official Journal of The City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society

Founded 1919

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: U.K. and Europe - £10 per annum.

Worldwide (outside Europe): £11 per annum, or U.S. \$22

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Front cover illustration: Harry Evans demonstrates his Paillard Hot Air Motor Gramophone outside the Niccol Centre, Cirencester. See page 325

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Cirencester Exhibition

The reports of the Cirencester Exhibition came too late for inclusion in the October Hillandale News. However this edition carries comprehensive accounts of this remarkably successful event, together with a report of the AGM which took place at the close of the Exhibition.

I should like to take this opportunity to offer, on behalf of the Society, our thanks to all those members, especially to our hosts from the Severn Vale Branch, for the time and effort they all put into making the 80th Birthday celebrations such a resounding success. Furthermore, I want to extend my thanks to all those who contributed to the daily programme of events.

Hillandale News

This edition of Hillandale News marks a further development in our quest to improve the journal. Our new desk-top publishing equipment will help to ensure that you can continue to receive a high quality journal. The new equipment also means that the long-suffering editor can, if necessary, spread the immensely time-consuming production work (about seventy hours per edition) around other members with IBM-compatible computers.

This changeover of equipment coincides with a change of editor. Charles Levin has resigned. I am pleased to say that our treasurer, Chris Hamilton, has agreed to step into the breach. We have to thank Charles for the sterling work he has done as editor over the past year and a half. He was the first editor who had to come to terms with computer based technology.

Seasons Greetings

Finally, may I extend to all members my kindest good wishes for the forthcoming festive season, and may 1992 bring you health, happiness and many gramophonic bargains.

Peter Martland

Please note that material intended for inclusion in Hillandale News must reach the Editor not later than six weeks before the first day of the month of issue.

Hence the deadline for the February Issue will be 15th December 1991.

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80th BIRTHDAY EXHIBITION

AT THE NICCOL CENTRE, CIRENCESTER

2nd to 7th SEPTEMBER 1991

Introduction

The idea of a Society exhibition in the autumn of 1991 was proposed some 15 months earlier by the Severn Vale Branch, and while a small committee was formed of members from other regions the brunt of getting it all together at Cirencester fell particularly on John Calvert who had a suitable hall lined up, and on Severn Vale members, in particular Mike Field and Richard Taylor. The theme of the exhibition was to mark the 80th birthday of the Phonograph and Gramophone Society movement in Great Britain that ultimately led to the birth of this Society in 1919, and early literature of some of these was on display from the Society's archives.

Members from all parts of the country met outside the Niccol Centre in the early morning of Sunday September 1st, the eve of the official mayoral opening, and before show cases and exhibits could be installed properly, the signs of battle of the previous week's play "Henry V" had to be cleared away. The early arrival of a Daily Telegraph reporter meant we had to set up a display on a table outside, but while being troublesome so early in the day the report would direct appreciable national interest our way when published two days later. There were also visits during the week from local papers and two commercial television teams came along, but both these media led to a steady stream of visitors by mid-week and the constant dismantling of show-cases for access to machines for demonstration. Needless to say none of these accounts got the facts right however hard we tried, but that is a well recognized hazard.

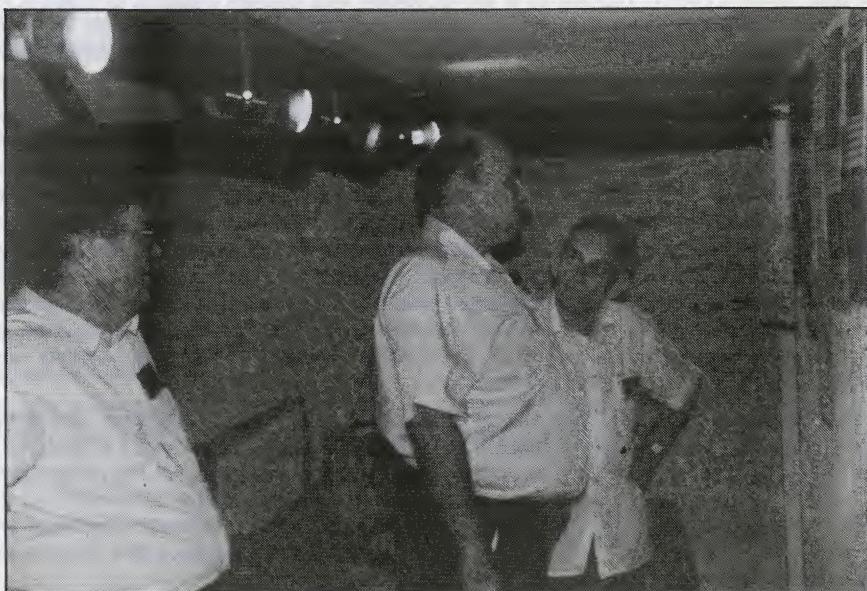
A strong team of members was always present to escort visitors, answer questions, demonstrate machines and man the stall, and after closing for an hour or so at the end of each afternoon was back on duty by 7pm every evening to get ready for the presentation at 7.30. After a day or so of this I think nearly every one had become detached from the rest of the world, most of the conversation was about records, machines or people one had met during the day, and events in the great outside seemed to have little place in our lives - there was just no time.

Naturally all this gave us a great chance to meet fellow members and know them better, and this would not have happened without a dedicated nucleus who sorted out the problems: Mike Field, Richard Taylor, Don Watson and Len Watts who were always available to shift, clean or mend things: however even the inadequate strip lighting would beat them and we and our machines glowed in the heat of adapted spot lamps. Frank Andrews, Tony Besford, Fredi Duennenberg (from Switzerland), Chris Hamilton, Miles Mallinson, Don Moore, Dave Roberts, Adrian Tuddenham, and Trevor Wilson gave their whole week or just a few days, turning their backs on homes and livelihood, and their generosity with this time and cost of travelling is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your presence and support.

Once the exhibition started two people became the king-pins of the whole project; John Calvert who had organised so much of the hall arrangements, and Aileen his wife, who provided us with evening meals every night, helped by their daughter Hilary. Their hospitality was most generous, offering their table to anyone who was working at the Centre at any time and putting up several members during the week. They provided a patch of home for all of us, and without this help sustaining ourselves through a busy six days would have been much more difficult. Our warmest thanks to the three of you.

The exhibition was one of the major events in the Society's long history and was achieved only through such support. On behalf of the wider membership and those who were not able to travel to Cirencester, may I thank everyone involved in the setting-up, running and dismantling for a most successful week.

George Frow



Richard Taylor, Jerry Madsen and Frank Andrews discuss Frank's display of records

The Displays

The Niccol Centre is situated in an out-of-the-way corner behind a main road near to Cirencester's famous church and market place. Before conversion to a civic centre the building was a malt house for a former brewery.

Above the steps down to the auditorium, which contained the equipment which was kindly lent to the Society for the week by Quad Electroacoustics Ltd., of Huntingdon, was hung an internally illuminated shopkeeper's "His Master's Voice" advertising sign. Behind the

Quad electronics was a table on which were an E. M. Ginn Expert Minor gramophone with a light blue painted horn and an Edison Opera phonograph. Both these were used by members for demonstrations throughout the week. These machines were augmented by an Edison Idelia phonograph, owned by our President, George Frow. George played all types of cylinders on this phonograph which was placed near the Society's bookstall. On the left of the entrance Nimbus Records had a trade stall featuring their "Prima Voce" series of CDs and cassettes.

In a room in the bowels of the Niccol Centre Adrian Tuddenham had installed his equipment which he uses to eliminate "Snap, Crackle and Pop" plus other surface noises from old or broken records. He had set up a pre-recorded demonstration tape to start as soon as someone entered the room.

Upstairs on the first floor in the right-hand gallery, housing a tea and coffee bar, stood two large showcases full of machines, many common to such exhibitions, as demonstrated in the Catalogue. One or two that caught the eye was the Greenhill Clockwork Motor operated phonograph and a "Paillard Hot Air Motor" operated disc gramophone owned by Harry Evans. On one of the days Harry set up his machine outside, topped it up with methylated spirits and proceeded to demonstrate it. This caused quite a crowd to gather but unfortunately the breeze played havoc with the exhaust and I am afraid "The Blue Danube" suffered variations in its current! A replica of a Tin Foil Phonograph and a Higham's Attachment for the Sound Magnifying Graphophone also took the eye.

In the gallery on the left of the first floor there were three showcases and a number of displays on the walls, many of which had been lent to the Society by the EMI Archives. Amongst this material from Hayes were examples of an "acetate" recorded disc showing the progressive stages through metalizing to the final "daughter" matrix as used in the presses. There were photographs of the factory at Hayes and large prints of former artists making records by the acoustic process. A coloured montage of EMI artists without any key left visitors to guess their identity. One of the cases contained a number of pocket and camera types of gramophones - I noticed a Colibri among others - with needle tins, cleaners, bamboo needle cutters, thorn needle sharpeners, sound boxes and many kinds of paraphernalia associated with gramophones and phonographs.

A case at the opposite end of the area was devoted to cylinder boxes of which 25 were on show plus a few of the cylinders including a pink Lambert Indestructible and a 6" long Bell - Tainter cylinder. There were two of the 5" diameter Concert/Grand types and a Pathé Salon type. Speaking of Pathé, Len Watts, our Pathé expert, had a number of 20" Pathé discs below this case. These he showed on request and two of these were featured in the TV coverage of the event. The third case in this gallery was positioned so that the visitor could approach the balustrade and view the auditorium. I noticed two different models of the Stollwerck gramophone which played discs made of chocolate, a "dog model" gramophone and a Theatrophone phonograph with a removable 5" mandrel.

The two first floor galleries were connected by scaffolding which was used to display a Pathé Elf, an HMV Lumière Model 460, and a Klingsor machine. On the wall above these were various pictures of current EMI artists and of the HMV record store in Oxford Street, London. These were crowned by a colourful HMV flag. Suspended from this scaffolding were two recording horns loaned by the EMI Archive.

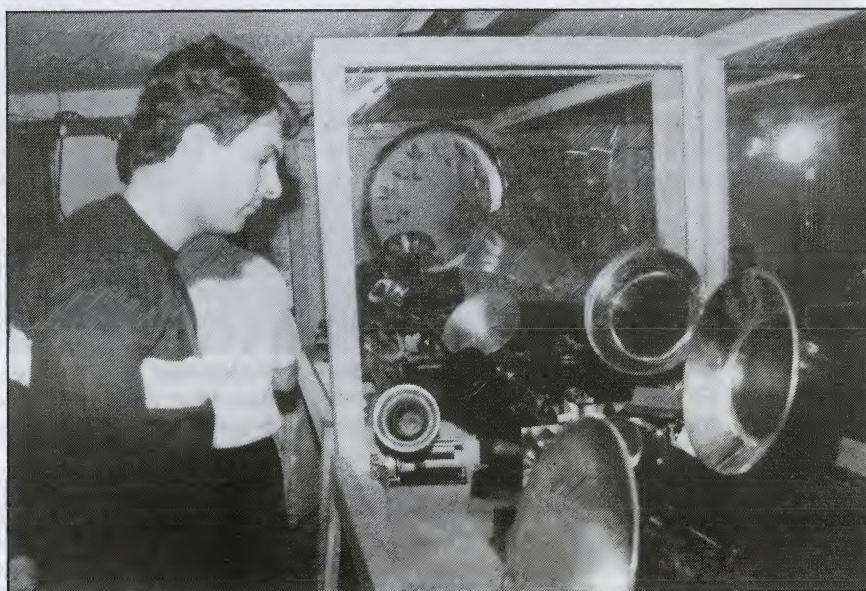
On the gallery on the top floor there were more exhibits from the EMI archive displayed including the microphone George V used to record his first Christmas message. Surrounding this were Melba's recording contract and the insurance policy taken out on Adelina Patti before she made her first recordings for the Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. Pictures of Paderewski and James E. Hough gazed down on this glass case while other portraits including that of Edison were to be seen elsewhere along with Edison's membership card of the Northants Phonograph Society.

On the walls of the gallery on the second floor I had, with the assistance of Len Watts, set up a display, with notes, of 103 different labels on disc records, or advertisements for same, covering those records sold on the British market between 1890 and early 1901. This display although comprehensive was not complete as some items were unavailable and I had overlooked some minor labels. Nevertheless I believe this to be the first time such a display has been mounted in Britain.

Attached to the balustrades on the top floor were masses of cables and lights which Adrian Tuddenham had managed to convert into quite a professional spotlight system which we were able to use for our lectures and recitals.

To those who could have attended this exhibition but did not I can only say that you missed a thoroughly good event and passed by the opportunity to meet some interesting people including recording engineers and former employees of the trade.

Frank Andrews



Paul Morris admires some of the exhibits

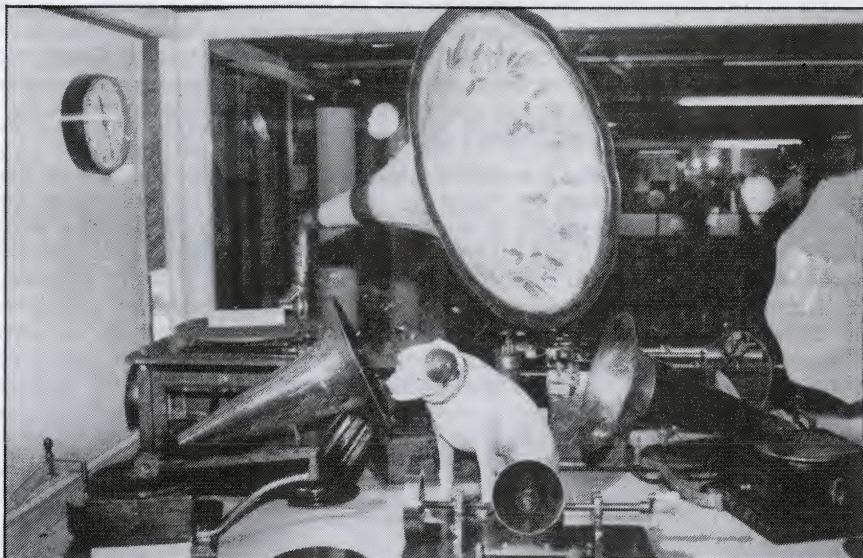
The talks and recitals

These began on the Monday evening with **Mike Field** giving a brief history of the development of the cylinder from Edison's tinfoil experiments in 1877 right through the Bell - Tainter improvements to the last Amberols of 1929. Mike played many examples of these cylinders ranging from a transfer on tape of a remake Thomas Edison made in 1927 of his original recording of 1877 on a tinfoil phonograph. It was difficult to recognise the words that Edison was speaking. However Mike assured us they were "Mary had a little lamb, whose fleece was as white as snow." We also heard music hall artists like Billy Williams and Florrie Forde. Sousa's Liberty Bell March with the Columbia Band and an unusual rendering of "Goodbye Dolly Gray" performed by the American Quartet were heard and Mike concluded his programme with "Questa o quella" from Verdi's Rigoletto performed by the celebrated tenor Alessandro Bonci. Mike used an Edison Standard, an Edison Idelia and an Edison Opera to reproduce these cylinders. The latter two machines showed how good Edison's recording medium had become and this listener thought the quality of recordings played were superior to many a disc recording.

Peter Adamson followed Mike's excellent recital with an equally enjoyable and well presented programme in which he traced the development of the discs from Emile Berliner's 5" record of 1889 playing at about 100rpm right through to the wax process ones of 1900 and 1901. He chose 10 examples from the wide range of records on his Symposium CD brought out to celebrate the centenary of Emile Berliner's invention in 1988. These included Berliner himself reciting "Twinkle, twinkle, little star" and Sousa's Band followed by George Graham giving an amusing spoof of American advertising techniques by telling the audience about Plant's Baking Powder. We also heard, what must be one of the earliest music hall records, Albert Chevalier performing "My Old Dutch" from December 1898. Fred Gaisberg, the Gramophone Company's recording expert, made the first trip to other parts of Britain to record local artists. He arrived at Glasgow in September 1899 and from that session we heard the well-known Scots fiddler J. Scott Skinner perform "The Marquis of Huntley's Farewell", "The Marquis of Tullybardine" and "The Perthshire Hunt". When Fred Gaisberg went on a trip to Russia in early 1901 he recorded many of the artists from the Mariinskii Opera of St.Petersburg. Peter played us a beautiful rendering of "Lensky's Aria" from Tchaikovsky's opera "Eugene Onegin" sung by Leonid Slobinov, principal tenor of the Mariinskii, recorded during this journey. At one point in his talk Peter let us hear the "Trademark" Gramophone perform and he played us one of the early puzzle plates on it. His recital concluded with a remarkable demonstration. We were shown a zinc metal 5" Berliner from about 1892 alongside his CD of Berliners. The similarity was extraordinary. Both these were about 5" in diameter and both had a metallic look to them. Peter then finished his talk by playing the transfer of this zinc record from that CD. It was of "Auld lang syne" probably performed by Emile Berliner himself. A most appropriate conclusion to an enjoyable evening.

Benet Bergonzi, the Curator of Artefacts at the National Sound Archive, opened Tuesday's session. He gave us a detailed survey on how the Sound Archive catalogued its collections. Every known modification or restoration done to any of their artefacts is scrupulously detailed in their catalogue so that any researchers can learn the full facts about any of the objects they are interested in. Benet also described the dilemma facing the National Sound Archive when they have to do any restoration. Do they restore to pristine condition and thereby destroy the originality of the machine or do they leave things

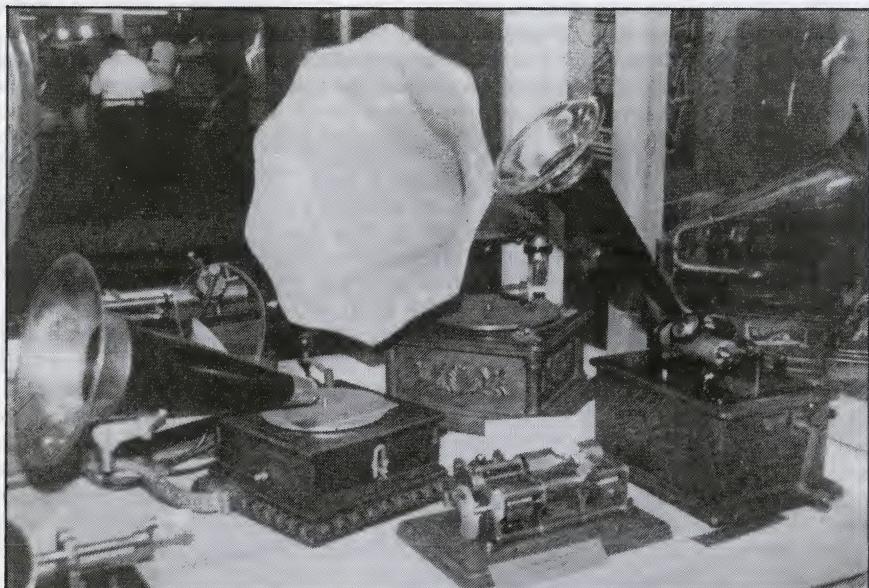
as they are? Benet explained that a middle course is usually taken and the minimum of work necessary to restore the machine to working order is done. We learnt that there are few museums in the country today displaying talking machines. Those that did, the Science Museum in South Kensington and the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh, have dismantled their exhibits and put them into store. Benet explained that the National Sound Archive's policy is to have a permanent display of talking machines in working order and it will sometimes be possible for members of the public to hear them perform by prior arrangement. Our thanks go to Benet for explaining in such a comprehensive manner his role in the National Archive.



"Trademark" Gramophone, Paillard Hot Air Motor Gramophone and Replica Tin Foil Phonograph

In the evening we were treated to a talk by Peter Copeland, of the National Sound Archive, on the "Industrial Archaeology of Sound Reproduction". Peter went into great detail on the Westrex electrical recording system. We learnt how the cutter was constructed using rubber tubes to produce certain characteristics which subsequently changed over the years as the rubber deteriorated. He produced a 1927 Westrex microphone and explained the construction of that. This type of microphone was in use from 1925 to 1931. We heard that it gave an extra output in the upper treble due to faulty parameters in its specification at the development stage. Peter went on to explain the moral problem facing the National Sound Archive when making copies of material recorded by the Westrex Electrical Sound Recording System between 1925 and 1931. Do they compensate for this fault in the microphone or not? He went on to explain that they had decided to transfer their discs in triplicate. Firstly they would play the records using a good quality electrical pick-up whose performance has been carefully measured to

give constant velocity characteristics. Then the records would be played with the sound equalised to known documented characteristics. He did not mention the third way. We were then told that he is trying to get accurate documentation on all the known electrical recording systems. Peter explained that it is a long and difficult process tracking down the information and asked the audience for any help. We also learnt that the National Sound Archive have been conducting experiments into finding a stable medium to hold their transferred recordings. They think a kind of computer optical disc is the answer and hope to test the 8 known types for such things as chemical self-degradation. However it is a long and expensive process and can only progress as funds are released. Peter was given an enthusiastic vote of thanks for giving us a fascinating insight into his work at the National Sound Archive.



Columbia Type AJ of 1902, Columbia Graphophone BX Eagle Phonograph & Edison Standard Phonograph

Alan Stagg, formerly Manager of EMI's Abbey Road Studios in London, opened Wednesday's sessions with a talk on his days with EMI. Before this Alan had worked with an independent studio called IBC, who provided recordings for many of the major record companies, apart from Decca and EMI. He made the first recordings of the pianist Daniel Barenboim who was then a schoolboy in Paris aged 15. When with Abbey Road Alan worked with many artists including John Barbirolli, Maria Callas, Jacqueline du Pré, Otto Klemperer, Herbert von Karajan, and Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli. He found Klemperer a most difficult person to work with and made few recordings with him. Sir John Barbirolli, in total contrast, he found a delightful person to work with and was most helpful in adopting

any improvements Alan might suggest to him. Another difficult artist to record with was the conductor Herbert von Karajan. During the recording of Beethoven's Triple Concerto with David Oistrakh (violin), Mstislav Rostropovich (cello) and Sviatoslav Richter, von Karajan did not turn up for rehearsals. These were left to the sub-conductor. When the Maestro eventually turned up only 3 hours of recording time were left to produce the final version. After agreeing to the placement of the orchestra von Karajan decided to adopt the complete opposite thus further reducing time available. However Alan managed to produce a successful recording, in spite of these problems, which is still in the catalogue today. Alan continued with a story about the eccentricities of the pianist Michelangeli. He was persuaded to record at Abbey Road. Alan, knowing that Michelangeli was fussy about the pianos he played, arranged for Steinway to augment the existing four pianos at Abbey Road with three further pianos. Michelangeli's piano technician proceeded to dismember three of the seven pianos and Michelangeli, on being asked what was going on, replied that he would only play on a piano after his expert had examined it. Michelangeli then left the studios and did not come back! Alan played excerpts from some of his recordings to give examples of his work. The afternoon ended with an enthusiastic thank you to Alan for such an interesting programme.

In the evening Norman White of Nimbus Records gave us an introduction to the Nimbus "Prima Voce" series of CDs. Norman trained as a singer with the Northern School of Music in Manchester; after graduating he joined Scottish Opera and remained with them for 22 years. He had been collecting 78 records of singers of the past for many years and played them on his E.M.Ginn Expert Senior gramophone. He told us that he felt this way of listening to these records brought the performer right into his living room with a sense of presence that electrical reproduction was unable to do. After being introduced to Nimbus by a friend he was able to persuade Count Labinsky, its founder, and Adrian Farmer, its Director of Music, that he had a system they could use and adapt to make commercial reissues of vocal 78s. By using Nimbus's Ambisonic process utilising a special microphone which picked up the ambience from all directions around the spot in which the it was placed they were able to produce recordings of these records played on the E.M.Ginn Expert. Norman told us that a committee consisting of 4 or 5 people including himself, Nina Walker, the celebrated accompanist, Adrian Farmer and the two recording engineers involved in the project listened to all the records of an artist and then chose which recordings should be included in the issued CD. Norman played us several excerpts from CDs issued so far. They included Louisa Tetrazzini, Adelina Patti, Francesco Tamagno, Titta Ruffo, Feodor Chaliapin, Beniamino Gigli, Eidé Norena, Lauritz Melchior and Kirsten Flagstad. All these selections showed the consummate taste of this panel. To this listener's ears Norman proved that this method of reproducing 78s of singers of the past brought them to life in a way that no other record company has been able to do so far. Norman received a well deserved applause for such a well presented and musical programme.

On Thursday Paul Morby, formerly Head of the Visual Arts Department of Birmingham University, gave us a well presented and instructive programme of videos of archive film of famous singers of the past. The talk was spiced with many interesting and amusing anecdotes concerning both the artists and Paul's consuming interest in the human voice. He opened with an extract from a film about the museum at Verdi's birthplace, Busseto, with various stills of celebrated singers accompanied by snatches of records of them singing. There followed some fascinating footage of artists like Kirsten Flagstad, Friedrich

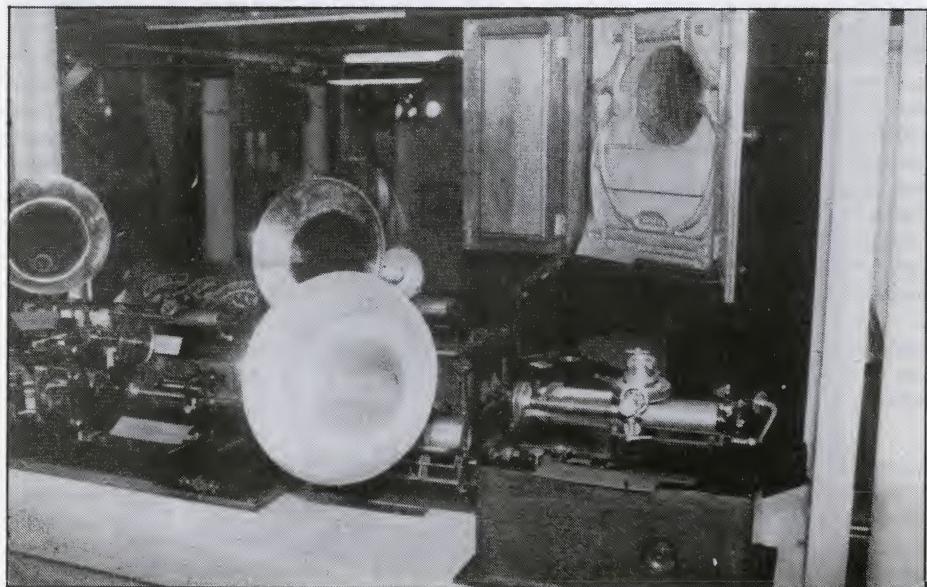
Schorr, Lawrence Tibbett and Maria Caniglia warming up before going on stage. We then watched Jan Kiepura, the Polish tenor, in action. Paul considered him a more popular artist than Gigli or Martinelli because he embraced the film medium to the utmost. He reckoned that Kiepura had more sex appeal than Domingo or Pavarotti and recalled his last concert in this country at the Albert Hall in 1965 where it was packed out and the crowds lined the streets hoping to get a cancelled seat. We saw an excerpt from a film "My Song Goes Round the World" made in 1932 with Josef Schmidt, another extremely popular tenor. Schmidt was only 4' 10" tall and could not therefore appear in opera on the stage. We had a brief glimpse of him in this film where we saw him wearing shoes with wooden platforms built in to make him appear taller! Another video of an extract from a film, shown this year by Austrian TV to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Richard Tauber, gave us a glimpse of the Lehár Museum in which we saw the actual piano at which he composed many of his famous operettas. We also heard Tauber sing "You are my heart's delight". Paul then went on to tell us about his present project in which he hopes to establish a museum at Montagnana, the birthplace of Giovanni Martinelli and Aureliano Pertile. This museum will contain artefacts, memorabilia and other items concerning these two singers. So far it has been gifted many of the costumes Martinelli used in his appearances at The Metropolitan Opera, New York and a large collection of newspaper cuttings concerning Martinelli. Hopefully Paul will be able to have this museum open in 1992. We were then shown a clip from a film made by Italian TV in 1985 to commemorate the centenary of these two singers. In it we saw some of Montagnana and then a rather inept interview with Pavarotti where the reporter keeps looking into space while talking to Pavarotti! Paul then answered several questions from the floor before finishing with a special request to show a video of an extract of the film "Metropolitan" made in 1934 starring Lawrence Tibbett. Here we saw a superb rendering of "Largo al factotum" from Rossini's "The Barber of Seville".



Don Moore reminds Mike Field it is time for a break!

The week's programme of talks and recitals was rounded off on Friday evening with a fine recital given by Richard Davies and Jacqueline Wilson, who, thanks to John Calvert's persuasive charms, stood in at the last moment when the advertised artists called off. They opened their recital with music for four hands on one piano and performed Dvorak's Legends No.1 in D min. and No.10 in B flat. Jacqueline followed with six of Granados's Tonadillas accompanied by Richard on the piano. We were then treated to four of de Falla's seven Popular Spanish Songs followed by three other Spanish songs including "Blue Eyes" by Turina and an arrangement of the traditional Spanish folk song "El Vito" by Obraadors. The audience was enraptured by these splendid performances. The first part of the recital concluded with four-hand arrangements of two of Brahms's Hungarian Dances: Nos.16 in F minor and 6 in D flat. After a short interval the second part opened with Jacqueline and Richard playing two of the rarely heard "Cod Pieces" by Peter Warlock: "Beethoven's Binge" and "The Old Codger" with shades of Fauré. The evening continued with Jacqueline singing three French cabaret songs accompanied by Richard. First we heard Satie's "La Diva d'Empire", then Poulenc's "La Rue de St.Martin" and lastly Weill's "Je ne t'aime pas". three further songs ensued: "Business Girl" and "The Night Club Proprietrix" both by Madeleine Dring and "A Word in my Ear" by Flanders and Swann in which we heard the tale of a Prima Donna past her best! The evening concluded with a couple of duets "Marigold" by Billy Mayerl and then an arrangement of "These Foolish Things". This was one of the most enjoyable evenings of song and piano that the audience had heard in a long time and after a long applause the artists returned to give an encore. We all left with the music ringing in our ears.

Chris Hamilton



Greenhill Clockwork Motor, Klingsor and Edison Model M Phonograph

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE NICCOL CENTRE, CIRENCESTER ON SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 7th 1991 at 2.30pm

Peter Martland, the Chairman, welcomed all those attending the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Geoff Edwards, Ken Loughland, Charles Levin, Christopher Proudfoot and Tom Stephenson.

Chairman's Report. Peter Martland said that 1990/91 had been an eventful year. He thanked Chris Hamilton for acting as Chairman during his absence in the U.S.A. earlier in the year. The main event of the year was the Exhibition at Cirencester mounted by the Severn Vale Branch. There was to be a change of Treasurer for the coming year: Mike Field has decided to retire after 10 years service during which he supervised the transfer of the Society's records from scraps of paper to a computer-based system. Mike was thanked for a sterling effort. There was to be a change of venue for the London Meetings which would now be held in the National Sound Archive, 29, Exhibition Road, where we would benefit from the enhanced facilities they are able to offer us. The first meeting was to be the Chairman's own on 17th October.

The Society's Rules have not been in Hillendale News for some time but this will be remedied at the earliest opportunity. One change in them is proposed for adoption: Honorary Vice-Presidents would be appointed for life or until they indicated otherwise and not be subject for annual election as at present. This change was proposed by Peter Martland, seconded by John Calvert and carried unanimously.

A proposal to appoint two new Honorary Vice-Presidents Christopher Proudfoot and Mike Field put forward by Peter Martland and seconded by George Frow was carried by universal acclamation.

Treasurer's Report. The Society's accounts were in the black. membership stood at 730, 75 members had lapsed but there had been 75 new recruits. The accounts for printing and posting the Hillendale News should show a slight surplus if the £10 subscription were maintained for another year. Mike proposed leaving the subscription at £10. The Booklist was in a healthy state. Our thanks must go to Dave Roberts and Richard Taylor for this. The profits had been used to produce the Exhibition Catalogue. This was aimed to be a long term venture and all help given by members to promote it amongst their friends would be appreciated. There was an amount of £10000 in the deposit account now but this would be down to £3000 by January 1992. A reserve was kept for emergencies and there was no tax liability. Adoption of this report was proposed by Peter Martland and seconded by Dave Roberts.

Secretary's Report. Suzanne Lewis said it had been a busy year. The article in the Observer had brought many enquiries and publicity material associated with the present exhibition was beginning to generate more. Several new members had joined at the door of the Exhibition. Television coverage was expected to bring in a few more. Adoption of the report was proposed by Frank Andrews and seconded.

The new Treasurer was to be Chris Hamilton, proposed by Frank Andrews and seconded by Phil Bennett.

Committee. The Midlands Branch had proposed Eddie Dunn for membership of the committee. Phil Bennett made the formal proposal which was seconded by R. Preston and carried. The existing committee were re-elected en bloc by unanimous acclaim.

The Booklist. Dave Roberts and Richard Taylor had rescued the Bookshop from Rugby. It had been DR's second term with the books. George Glastris had agreed to take on the mail order side. The Booklist would be split into two divisions: mail order and phonofairs. Chris Hamilton said it was hoped to review new books in Hillendale News. Redundant material had been disposed of and to save money new publications like the Regal Catalogue would be printed to order after enough orders had accumulated. Several unpublished manuscripts were in line for publication. The new neckties were now available.

Any other business. Phil Bennett hoped that now the Midlands had a representative on the committee Regional reports would be sent in. Peter Martland said he would like these reports to be published but PB said as meetings were held bi-monthly the deadline for publication may be missed. However he would try to overcome this.

Peter Watson from Portsmouth indicated his desire to set up a regional branch there. He mentioned that many local museums have gramophones and phonographs deteriorating in their stores due to dampness and other problems. He wanted the Society to contact all museums and let them know of our existence. We should place adverts in all museum newspapers. Peter Martland promised to examine this.

Mike Field assured the members that all computer records would be kept strictly confidential. George Frow proposed a vote of thanks to Peter Martland for the excellent hospitality we had at the committee meetings in Cambridge. Thanks were also expressed to the rest of the committee for their efforts on behalf of the Society and to the Severn Vale Branch for organising the Exhibition. Peter Martland closed the meeting and thanked all for attending.

C.L.P.G.S. BALANCE SHEET YEAR ENDING 12th AUGUST 1991

Receipts		Payments	
Current a/c	2854.54	Hillendale News (printing)	4230.00
Subs. Sterling	6590.50	Hillendale News (postage)	1672.62
Advertising	802.90		
Transfer from			
dollar a/c	1441.48	Computer maintenance	330.54
Transfer from			
deposit a/c	4000.00	Postage and stationery	447.10
Transfer from			
No.1 a/c	40.00	Part payment for Exhibition Catalogue	1495.00
Book sales	824.73	Transfer to No.2 a/c	812.73
Northampton		Northampton	
Phonofair 1990	84.00	Phonofair 1990	32.05
Northampton			
Phonofair 1991	202.30	Miscellaneous	785.08
Miscellaneous	175.34	Transfer to deposit a/c	6000.00
		Current a/c	1210.20
TOTAL	£17015.32	TOTAL	£17015.32

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Records...Displays...Competitions...



Gramophones...Phonographs

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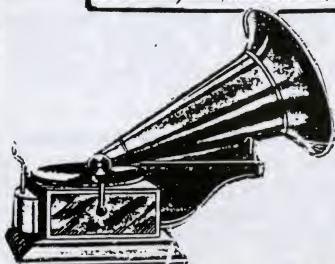
Needle Tins...78's...Accessories...

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Records...Displays...Competitions...

4th. Northampton Phonofair. 10am-4pm.

City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society.



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LIGHTER SIDES

THE J.H.SQUIRE CELESTE OCTET

by Peter Cliffe

One has only to scan the pages of any Radio Times from the Twenties or Thirties to see how constant was the popularity of light orchestras in that uneasy period bracketed by two world wars. David de Groot, Tom Jones, Reginald King, Joseph Muscant, Gershom Parkington and Albert Sandler, all of whom directed orchestras of great charm, had their faithful followers, and their gramophone records sold well. But for many people with long memories, mention of the J.H.Squire Celeste Octet strikes a particularly evocative chord.

Born in Devon in 1880, John Henry Squire was a slim, elegant man, his monocle only partly softening the lines of a tough, shrewd face. He is said to have been a boxer before he turned to music, abandoning the ring after inadvertently killing an opponent. Whatever the truth of that, he carved for himself a secure niche in a gentler profession.

Like W.H.Squire, a contemporary, he was both a cellist and a composer of light pieces, and the two men must at times have been confused. Indeed, the late Reginald King once told me how J.H. received an invitation to play which was intended for W.H. Despite that, he fulfilled the engagement!

J.H.Squire's early life seems to have been full of variety, and it is uncertain when he became a professional musician. One has to treat his revelations with a certain amount of suspicion. He claimed to have introduced ragtime to London in 1911, and to have directed the first English jazz band to play in the West End. Neither statement will stand close scrutiny. However, his assertion that his Celeste Octet was the only light orchestra to perform at the prestigious Chappell and Boosey Ballad Concerts could well be true.

Not much is known about the man personally. He married Dorothy Gladys Beastall, by whom he had three sons and three daughters, and eventually settled at Beckenham in a beautifully furnished house with extensive grounds. He used it in publicity material, along with photographs of himself in plus-fours, or setting out in top-hat and tails for some evening function with his wife.

The earliest of his records I have so far traced were made at a single session in the autumn of 1917. 'Where the Black-Eyed Susans Grow' (Dave Radford - Richard Whiting) appeared on Winner 3178; 'You'd Never Know that Old Home Town of Mine' (Howard Johnson - Walter Donaldson) and 'Down Where the Swanee River Flows' (Charles A.Alberte - Charles McCarron) were paired on Winner 3187. They were labelled as by the Karsino Orchestra, directed by J.H.Squire.

Around this time too, Guardsman 2070 featured J.H.Squire's Dance Orchestra (almost certainly the same ensemble) playing Sidney Baynes' well-known waltz 'Ecstasy', published in 1913, the year after 'Destiny' was first heard. It can be seen, therefore, that Squire was playing neither ragtime nor jazz at this dark period during the Great War, but dance music, and not the kind regarded as 'hot'.

According to Squire, he founded the Celeste octet in 1913, but on another occasion he stated that it played its first public engagement at the South Parade Pier, Southsea, on

April 19th 1914, and that it returned on September 21st 1930, for its 100th appearance. If the Octet was indeed formed as early as 1913, and the date of its initial engagement is correct, it had a long wait to secure a booking. It would also seem that in those days Squire had both a dance orchestra and a light orchestra under his control, which is quite possible, of course.

But did the Celeste Octet really make no gramophone records from the time of its creation to June 1924, when it entered the Columbia studios to wax Schumann's 'Träumerei' and Dvorak's 'Humoreske', coupled on Columbia 3470? It seems highly improbable.

What is certain is that from 1924 to 1932 the J.H.Squire Celeste Octet recorded exclusively for Columbia. Naturally Squire claimed it had the largest sale of gramophone records of any 'straight' orchestra in the world. That seems likely to be an exaggeration; but his records did, undoubtedly, enjoy substantial sales.

The Celeste Octet's recording of 'Abide with Me' was made in September 1924, the month before Columbia went 'electric', utilising Samuel Liddle's setting of H.F.Lyte's famous hymn. This appeared on 3550, but remakes were issued on 3550R in both June 1926 and January 1927, attesting to the popularity of the Celeste Octet's performance. Born in Leeds, Liddle was an accomplished piano accompanist, much in demand at ballad concerts, who also composed a number of ballads.

Ernest Bucalossi's 'Grasshoppers' Dance' (1907) was recorded in December 1924 (3608), and again in April 1926 (3608R). This engaging novelty was also waxed by Jack Hylton for HMV in June 1931 and Decca in September 1933. A Musical Director, Bucalossi died in April 1933 aged 69.

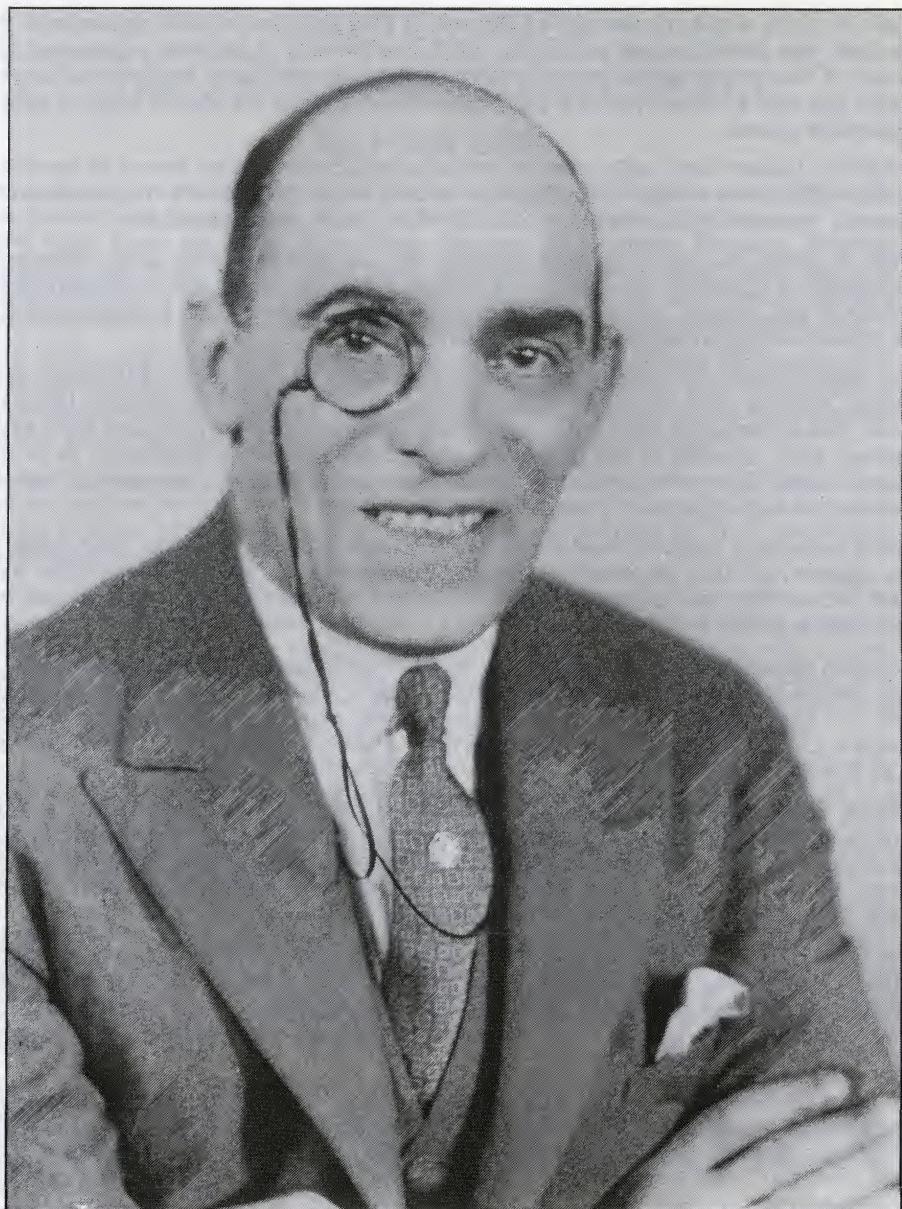
Rodolphe Berger's valse lente 'Amoureuse' had retained its appeal since its début in 1900. The Celeste Octet recorded it in February 1925 (3643). Strange, is it not, how frequently only one work survives, despite a composer's many successes? No one now recalls Berger's 'Loin du Pays' (1899) or 'Parfums d'Hiver' (1900). For that matter, nothing seems to be known about Berger himself.

Zdenek Fibich's 'Poème' was recorded in October 1925 (3796). It was taken by the famous violinist Jan Kubelik, who arranged it, from the orchestral work 'At Twilight'. Fibich, a Czech, was born at Vseborice in 1850, and wrote operas, tone poems, symphonies and songs. he died in 1900. Poème was transformed into 'My Moonlight Madonna', a hit of 1933, by the addition of Paul Francis Webster's lyric.

The Celeste Octet recorded the Gavotte from Ambroise Thomas' once very popular opera 'Mignon' in November 1925 (3877), but the Polonaise and Romance had to wait until April 1928 when they were backed on Columbia 9507. Thomas was born at Metz in 1811 and died in Paris in 1896. 'Mignon' was introduced to Drury Lane audiences in 1870, a few years after its initial appearance.

Two other half-forgotten operas were saluted in May 1926, when the Octet recorded 'Scenes that are Brightest' from William Vincent Wallace's 'Maritana', first produced at Drury Lane in 1845, and 'Then You'll Remember Me', from Michael William Balfe's 'The Bohemian Girl', first heard at Drury Lane in 1843. These flowing melodies graced Columbia 9107.

That same month the Octet recorded Tit's once well-known Serenade; another Serenade (more correctly 'La Serenata') by Braga (both on 9116) and Yradier's 'La Palorna' ('The



John Henry Squire, Director of the J.H.Squire Celeste Octet

Dove'), which appeared on Columbia 4034. A.Emil Titl composed several operas and conducted at the Vienna Burgtheater. He died in Vienna in 1882. Gaetano Braga's very sweet melody was published in 1867; reference books disregard him. Now remembered for one lively tune, Sebastian Yradier was Spanish, born at Sauciego (Alava) in 1809. He died at Vitoria in 1865.

Considering his enormous output as a serious composer, and the high regard in which he was held during his lifetime, it is remarkable how quickly the world of music forgot Joseph Joachim Raff after his death at Frankfurt-am-Main in 1862. He was born at Lachern, Zurich, in 1822. Only his beautiful Cavatina for violin kept his name from disappearing altogether. The Octet recorded it in June 1926 (4154).

In June, too, Virgilio Ranzato's 'Passione' was recorded electrically for Columbia 3722R, having first been waxed acoustically on 3722 in April 1925. This distinctive melody was brought to Britain by de Groot, who tracked down the composer after hearing it played in a Paris café. It was described as a valse.intermezzo.

Musical snobbery ensured that Elgar's lighter pieces were shouldered aside in favour of his serious works. This was deplorable, as they are of great charm. However 'Salut d'Amour' did become a well-loved tune, being much recorded. The Octet's version, made in December 1926, was issued on Columbia 4294.

Some of the most appealing pieces recorded by the Octet came from quite obscure composers. Who was J.Maynard Grover? His delightful tune 'Close to My Heart' was waxed in April 1927, appearing on Columbia 4456. I am inclined to think it may be the music for a forgotten song.

The year 1928 saw the emergence of some particularly enjoyable recordings by Squire's robust little orchestra, including two of his own compositions, 'Evening Lullaby' and 'Evensong at Twilight' recorded in April and paired on Columbia 4983. Squire's tunes were simple and lilting; ideal for the kind of ensemble he directed.

Interestingly, these melodies also appeared on Regal G 9167, supposedly by the Venetian Players, who were in reality a quintet from the Celeste Octet, and most likely under Squire's personal direction. These recordings were made in June.

The Australian composer Archibald Emmett Adams will always be remembered for his enduring song hit 'The Bell's of St.Mary's', but he also wrote songs or complete scores for London stage productions, among them 'Lumber Love', which opened at the Lyceum in March 1928, and achieved 100 performances. From it came 'Always Cry for the Moon' and 'My Man' recorded by the Celeste Octet in May (4938).

'My Inspiration is You' was a great hit for Lawrence Wright as 'Horatio Nicholls'. The Octet did record an occasional dance tune, and this was one of them, waxed in October 1928 (5123). Many of Wright's melodies were pretty indeed, lending themselves readily to light orchestral arrangements.

General Charles G.Dawes' 'Melody for Violin' had an irresistible tune, and was deservedly popular. Dawes ran as Vice-Presidential candidate alongside Calvin Coolidge in the American Presidential election. Stephen Evans provided the violin solo for Squire's recording of July 1929 (5639).

It is highly unusual to encounter the J.H.Squire Celeste Octet in the rôle of accompanists, but this occurred in July 1929, when it supported Dora Labbette (soprano) and Hubert Eis dell (tenor) for two duets, C.B.Hawley's 'The Sweetest Flower that Blows' and Maurice Besly's 'Marigold'. Columbia DB 157, on which these appear, is a little gem.

In November the Octet recorded its director's 'Twilight on the Waters', a valse lente, (Columbia DB 2). It is surprising that such a capable business man as J.H.Squire should have been able to create music of great delicacy; but then Irving Berlin and Richard Rodgers were renowned for driving hard bargains.

Two more Squire compositions (among his most charming) were waxed in February 1930; 'The Scent of the Jasmine' and 'The Song of the Waterfall' appearing on DB 107. This record must have sold very well as it is still not hard to find.

Tolchard Evans' 'Memories of Devon' was paired on Columbia DB 231 with Harold Fraser-Simson's 'Collette' both recorded in July 1930. Evans, a bandleader and incredibly prolific song composer, will always be remembered for 'Lady of Spain', but he had many another hit. Fraser-Simson made a name for himself in 1917 with the very long running 'Maid of the Mountains'. He also wrote the music for 'A Southern Maid', 'The Street Singer' and 'Betty in Mayfair'.

In 1931, the Celeste Octet hearkened back to the golden years of the concert ballad, recording in February Annie Fortescue Harrison's 'In the Gloaming', first heard in 1877 and M.Piccolomini's 'Whisper and I Shall Hear' (both DB 628). Theodore Auguste Marie Joseph Piccolomini, a Dubliner born in 1835, composed the famous ballad 'Ora Pro Nobis'. He had many successes but no business sense, dying in 1902 with unpaid debts.

Although the Celeste Octet made a few records in 1932 either Columbia had lost interest or Squire fell out with them. Whatever the reason, he turned full circle in 1933 by returning (not at the best of times) to Winner, for whom he recorded Enrico Toselli's 'Serenata'; John Rogers Thomas's 'Eileen Alanna', a ballad first heard in 1879; (both on Winner 5600, issued in October 1933); Riccardo Drigo's Serenade from 'Les Millions d'Arlequin' and George Benjamin Aitken's ballad of 1900 'Maire My Girl'; (both on Winner 5614, issued in November 1933).

If the Celeste Octet made any later records, I have no details of them. It was still very popular as a broadcasting orchestra, having been heard over the air (so Squire claimed!) more than 300 times by 1934, when he was included in a set of Will's 'Radio Celebrities' cigarette cards. As late as 1941 the Octet took part in 'Music While You Work'.

It is sad to think how unpopular light orchestral music has become with the general public; nor is there any reason to suppose things may change in the immediate future. But the exquisitely performed and excellently recorded music issued by Columbia from the mid-Twenties to the early Thirties, when the J.H.Squire Celeste Octet was at the peak of its popularity, is a must for anyone who mourns (as I do) the passing of light music as a form of entertainment.

IS THERE LIFE AFTER GRAMOPHONES?

by Ted Cunningham

From time to time people ask me, rather pointedly I sometimes think, how I ever came to join the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society. I always reply that my daughter is entirely to blame.

When she was tiny my daughter was an engaging little baggage, adored by teachers and schoolfellows alike. Today she is a lady of elegance, sophistication and wit, embodying in one little petite frame the attributes of Gertrude Lawrence, Florence Nightingale and that girl on the Navy Rum posters. However, sandwiched between the pretty caterpillar and the gorgeous butterfly there was an intermediate chrysalis stage when she was a fiend incarnate, a monster who could with one glance turn small mammals into stone and strip several coats of paint from a window frame. It was during this Dark Age, shortly before her 17th birthday, that she came me one breakfast-time enquiring how she could get to Marylebone High Street that afternoon. Eager to win her favour (it was the first time she had spoken to me for days) I gave her the necessary directions. "But," I said, "What about school?"

"This IS school," she said. "I'm taking a school party to be shown over BBC Radio London". Ah-ha, I thought. My daughter is keeping something from me. She and her schoolmates are to be guests on somebody's programme. They will broadcast to the Metropolis and when she comes home to tea she will casually throw out a remark revealing this. When she does I will surprise her, for I have a tape-recorder which can run continuously for three hours, and before I

leave home this afternoon I will set it to record Radio London's output and thus preserve for posterity my little girl's radio début.

Well, I was wrong. My daughter and her friends certainly enjoyed an interesting and instructive afternoon among the broadcasters but they were not invited to address the microphone, and the citizens of London were spared their girlish laughter. All unaware of this my faithful tape-recorder worked into the dusk. It was still doing so when I returned home shortly before five o'clock: It was in the act of catching the very last item of "Swapshop".

I must explain about "Swapshop". It was one of BBC Radio London's most popular programmes at that time, a sort of ethereal 'Exchange and Mart'. Listeners would telephone offering articles for sale or exchange, and then other listeners would telephone to take up the offers. On the day in question, 16th November 1978, the final invitation came from a lady from my own part of London. She said, "I have a good wind-up portable gramophone and I want ten pounds for it."

Half-an-hour later I was seated in the lady's armchair, delighted and a little light-headed, the new proprietor of a fine Columbia Model 112a. The lady wanted ten pounds and after much haggling she had agreed to accept my final offer of £15. Twenty-eight years had passed since I last owned a spring-driven acoustic gramophone, yet I found myself able to operate all the controls within a remarkably short time, and after only the minimum of instruction from the previous owner. As with the riding of bicycles it seems that mastery of these machines, once acquired, does not desert one. The lady told me, "That gramophone will be exactly fifty years old tomorrow." Such exactitude surprised me, and I examined the machine minutely, wondering if I would find some 'sell-before' date. She

explained: "It was a 21st Birthday present, and tomorrow I will be 71". Neither the lady nor the gramophone betrayed any hint of their ages. "What a splendid birthday present," I said. "Not really", she replied. "I was never fond of music. What I really wanted was a pearl necklace. This has spent most of its life in the loft."

Travelling home I reflected that the lady's loft had evidently been clean and free from damp; also that I was now the owner of a gramophone but neither records nor needles, nor any idea of where to obtain either. I thought about this and the following morning I telephoned EMI. I was swiftly connected to a gentleman who sounded as though he were a sucking a sweet. I was in a high state of excitement brought on by a combination of euphoria and total ignorance and I announced my acquisition rather as Howard Carter must have told Lord Caernarvon about his discovery of Tutankhamen. "Listen," I said, "I have come into the possession of a Columbia Portable Gramophone. It is fifty years old!" EMI remained commendably calm in the face of this disclosure. I tried again. "This is a hand-wound machine, a Model 112a," I insisted. "I see", he said, amid sucking noises. "I'm afraid we don't stock those any more." I explained that I needed gramophone needles, and he put me through to somebody who could put me on to somebody who knew of a chap in Bournemouth who when I called him, readily agreed to supply me. Even before his needle tins reached me I had found a few 78 records in a junk shop and it was at last possible to hold a small inaugural ceremony. I lowered the tone arm and stood back amazed at the quality and volume of sound which emerged from that small black box.

As time passed I acquired more records, and within three months there came another gramophone, a humble HMV 101 found in a shop. Soon after I began lying awake at nights worrying about the 50-year-

-old mechanisms: somebody had told me the motors should be overhauled and relubricated. I am no engineer. To whom could I turn for advice? Always go to the top, I say. I telephoned the Science Museum.

I don't know who he was, but he was in the Talking Machine Department. "Oh, yes," he said, "There was a firm in Richmond that used to overhaul gramophones but I think they have closed down. Oh no, we never actually play our own machines; they are just for people to look at. Heavens, I don't know how we would go about mending them. Actually there is a chap in the Museum who is quite an enthusiast, quite knowledgeable, but he isn't in the Talking Machine Department; actually, he's in Clocks and Watches I think". My disappointment must have reached him down the telephone line. "Hold on," he said. "Here is something that might help you. Do you know about the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society? No? Neither do I, but there's a note about them here. The City of London is local to you, of course, isn't it? I can put you in touch with their Treasurer. His name is Barry Williamson. Funny thing," he said, "he seems to live in Liverpool".

And that, gentle reader, is how I came to make my first contact with the oldest body of its kind in the world. I refer, of course, to the CLPGS., and not to Mr Williamson, whose response to my letter of enquiry was generous to say the least and as I was to discover later, typical of him. It took the form of a two-page letter containing detailed instructions for the dismantling and overhauling of a gramophone motor. I have it still, and refer to it in moments of need. Enclosed with the letter was a leaflet about the Society and an invitation to join at the cost of a mere £4.00. I was impressed. The letter alone was worth four quid, I thought, so I sent my subscription by return of post. A good, honest fellow, this Williamson, and I

often wonder what became of him.

The first meeting I attended was the 1979 AGM. Annual General Meetings are rarely an auspicious introduction to any sort of organisation, but this one had attendant side-shows and was held in the august surroundings of the Eccentrics Club in St.James's. The company was congenial and I was assimilated into the Society so smoothly that barely a ripple showed as the waters closed over my head. Within a year six more gramophones found their way into my house, and special reinforced shelving was climbing up the walls to accommodate the 78 records. Now, on cold and frosty nights, passers-by hear the house creaking and groaning under the deadweight of them.

It is interesting to note the reaction of those about me. My wife is extremely tolerant and understanding. My neighbours are unfailingly kind to me: when we meet they smile, and nod, and touch their temples respectfully. My daughter, who started it all, and my son as well, have now left home, so I have been able to extend my collection into their old bedrooms. To be truthful I can't quite

remember: maybe the collection started extending into the bedrooms first, and the children left home afterwards; it is of no consequence. One day if I need more space I might buy the house next door and then the next one...

What's that, Nurse? Time for my medicine already? Just a moment, then: come and see how high I have built this pile of needle tins...



HILLANDALE BOOKLIST

Due to unexpected demand the Complete Regal Catalogue February 1914 to December 1932 by Arthur Badrock and Frank Andrews is now out of print. It is hoped to have it reprinted and an announcement will be made when it has come into stock.

NEW ITEMS NOW AVAILABLE

B 202 Old Gramophones by Benet Bergonzi (Shire publication). £2.40

B 203 Fascinating Rhythm by Peter Cliffe. Book on 20s and 30s music and artists. £16.95

B 205 CLPGS Cirencester Exhibition Guide. Many machines illustrated. £5.50

M 8 CLPGS Tie, new design in dark red or blue with gold woven logo. Ladies! an ideal Christmas present for your loved one; why not buy him two? Only £4.80 each.

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All the above items are available from: CLPGS Booklist, 80, Boltons Lane, Pyrford, Woking, Surrey GU22 8TN. All overseas orders should add 10% to cover postage costs.

WILL DUNN

by Rick Hardy

Although I am an avid collector of Music Hall records I have in the past tended to ignore recordings by 'studio' singers, such as Jack Charman and Harry Fay, and concentrate on the 'real' artistes whose main careers were in the Halls. Consequently I have missed out on many recordings of fine songs which for one reason or another were never put onto wax by the original artistes. It is a sad fact that many of the 'greats' of the Music Hall failed to record their most famous songs. We have no record of Marie Lloyd doing "Don't Dilly Dally", of Daisy Dormer singing "I Wouldn't Leave My Little Wooden Hut For You" or of Victoria Monks singing "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey?" for instance.

Recently I came across a 78 on the Phoenix label from a singer (either unknown or working under pseudonym) by the name of Will Dunn. The singer didn't seem to be of much interest but the two songs were. They were composed by the great Wilkie Bard in collaboration with the likes of Frank Leo and David & Arthurs. The songs were "Chrysanthemums" and "Moo Cow" and although both songs were an important part of Wilkie Bard's act they were not recorded by him, except for a chorus of "Chrysanthemums" in a medley of his hits made for HMV in 1932.

When I got down to listening to the disc the first impression I received as I lowered the stylus was the very low surface noise. Most fortunately I had picked up a near mint copy. My second impression as the orchestra struck up was of the excellent quality of recording for the 1913 disc, but the third and greatest surprise was of the performance of the singer. Wilkie Bard had one of the most individual and easily recognisable voices on the Music Hall stage and one that in my opinion would be very difficult to imitate. Nevertheless Will Dunn manages it to such a startling degree (including the comic patter) that I personally cannot distinguish him from Wilkie Bard - I do have experience of these things!

Repeated listening has not diminished my belief that Will Dunn is either one of the greatest impressionists of all time or in fact Wilkie Bard himself.

Phoenix was a 'cheapie' label set up by its parent company Columbia and issued all kinds of material including Music Hall at cut prices much of it under pseudonyms but there is no record of Bard having recorded for Columbia at any time. In fact at around this period he was recording for the Gramophone Company, perhaps with an exclusive contract, thus explaining the pseudonym.

There are other recordings on Phoenix by Will Dunn. Again they all appear to be Wilkie Bard songs and I would be grateful if anyone could send me tapes of them. Meanwhile if anybody wishes to hear my Will Dunn recording all they have to do is send me a cassette tape (any length) and a stamped addressed envelope and I will copy it for them. My address is [REDACTED] Watford WD1 6BN.

I am indebted to Arthur Badrock, who is at present working with Frank Andrews on a catalogue of Phoenix records, for information supplied.

CHILTERNNS BRANCH

If any members living south of Watford or beyond would like to come to a Chilterns Branch meeting in late January 1992, would they please write Dave Roberts at [REDACTED] Pyrford, Woking, Surrey GU22 8TN enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. The invitations are limited and so will be allocated on a first come first served basis.

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REPORTS

London Meeting July 16th 1991

"Diamonds Are Forever" was a programme presented by Michael Appleton in which he used his own Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph.

He provided the audience with programmes which were copies of an "Edison Music Monthly" cover. The evening opened with a speech by Thomas A. Edison entitled "Lest we forget" honouring the American armed forces who took part in the Great War. This was followed by "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" played by the Georgia Melodians. Vernon Dalhart singing "Puttin' On The Style" (made in 1927) came next. The lyrics were different from those that Lonnie Donegan used in his famous version. The popularity of early radio in the USA was highlighted by Elsie Clark singing "Loudspeakin' Papa". Michael told us of some of the difficulties encountered during the manufacture of the discs. We were shown that the Edison Company, contrary to popular belief, was able to make records by well known classical artists. Michael played "Celeste Aida" sung by the well known tenor Alessandro Bonci. This was followed by Lucrezia Bori singing "Voi che sapete". The Tennessee Happy Boys record of "Sweet Georgia Brown" brought this highly entertaining début recital by Michael to a close. Well done Michael!

Geoff Edwards

Society Meeting at Neasden August 17th 1991

In his talk on the early marketing of disc records in Great Britain Frank Andrews concentrated on those issued during the reign of King Edward VII from January 1901 to May 1910, the exact era when the

gramophone moved from being an overgrown toy with 7" records progressing to one with double-sided records with serious music pretensions. In between came one experiment after the other, vertical cuts, centre starts, and all kinds of undersize and oversize records, and a lot of these were given a playing on Frank's excellent Quad valve equipment, while lantern slides showed the progression and development of the different labels. One fact that evaded this writer is that labelled records in the early days were called "stencilled" records by the trade to distinguish from etching, pressing, incising and so on, such as seen on Berliners or Pathés of the time, and it may be new too to some members.

The century started with Edison-Bell's commanding hold over the British market, but after 1903 domestic and foreign firms mushroomed, bringing in all sorts of trade marks and vast catalogues of largely sentimental music, and these added extensively variety to a well-crafted programme. Ted and Len were on hand as always to help with the equipment and Wyn Andrews provided refreshments suitable for a warm afternoon. This was Frank Andrews at his most informative.

A London Correspondent

London Meeting Bloomsbury Institute 17th September 1991

In this the last meeting to be held at the Bloomsbury Institute, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, "For Children, By Children and About Children" was the programme. It had been postponed from last December. The first item presented by Len Watts was a Pathé disc "A Summer Morning" sung by Walter Lawrence. Rick Hardy followed with Billy Williams singing "Why Doesn't Santa Bring Nothing To Me". Geoff Townsend's Blue Amberol of Bransby Williams reciting the "Awakening of Scrooge" sounded well

when played on Robin Hayden's table model Amberola. Memories of "Children's Hour" were revived by George Frow, whose cassette excerpt "Toytown" was well received. Peter Curry's contribution included "Children's Voices" and "Little Boy Blue" sung by Ernest Pike and John McCormack respectively. "Our Little Kiddy Sings The Best Song Of All" sung by Billy Williams was played by Frank Andrews on behalf of Ted Matthews. Robin Hayden's Amberola featured once more playing "Rock All Our Babies To Sleep", performed by Bud Thompson. The programme concluded in fine style with Pinky Tomlin singing "Chatanooga Shoeshine". Well done gentlemen!

Geoff Edwards

I made the journey from North London to Cirencester by public transport and contrary to what one normally hears about public transport the following may be of interest: the 10.15 ex Paddington left at 10.15 and arriving at Swindon 2 minutes early. The branch connection to Kemble left on time arriving at Kemble 1 minute early and the 12 noon bus left at 12 noon arriving at Cirencester at 12.27 precisely. Likewise the journey home was accomplished to time all the way. Altogether a day to remember.

Yours sincerely,

K. Catchpole, Barnet Herts.

(Your kind remarks about the exhibition are music to the ears of those who organised it and makes them feel it has been worth all the effort. It is also encouraging to hear some praise about the much maligned public transport services. Ed.)

LETTERS

Cirencester Exhibition

Dear Editor,

May I take this opportunity of writing to express my deep appreciation and thanks to the magnificent display put on at Cirencester for the 80th birthday celebrations of the forebears of the City of London Phonograph and Gramophone Society.

The setting was perfect blending in with the old machines on display and the actual displays were superb; indeed it would have needed much more than one visit to have appreciated all that was on view. As a member and collector for 12 years I am a comparative newcomer but I had the great opportunity of both meeting and talking to many of the celebrated people who are usually just names in the magazines - this alone was worth the visit.

The demonstration involving the removal of the sound made by a crack in a record was fascinating as was the ready information supplied on this topic by a real enthusiast.

Electrophone

Dear Editor,

The other evening I came across the following passage which seems of interest to readers of Hillandale News. Perhaps one of the more expert readers could 'interpret' the item taken from "The Assyrian Rejuvenator" by Clifford Ashdown (published by Ward Lock in 1902):

"Although the restaurant had been crowded some time before he arrived, Mr Romney Pringle had secured his favourite seat opposite the feminine print after Gainsborough, and in the intervals of feeding listened to a selection from Mascagni through a convenient Electrophone, price sixpence in the slot."

Yours sincerely,

Bill Dean-Myatt, Sutton Coldfield.

Visit to Bradwell

Dear Editor,

Five members of the Society were pleased to be present at the private museum of Robin Hayden at Bradwell, Essex on the 29th September last. Apart from the displays of vintage motor-cycles, pedal cycles and various bits of agricultural machinery there was plenty of indoor interest in the shape of pianolas, organs, radios, lanterns, tools, to mention but a few, but most of all in our own line many phonographs (including an Edison Opera) and gramophones from small table models to the giant 36" EMG horn machine. There were plenty of records to play and in one corner cylinder recordings could be made on a magnificent machine. The weather wasn't very kind: perhaps that is why the refreshment room was so busy. Members had plenty of opportunity to discuss our hobby with the public.

Yours sincerely,

Len Watts, Twickenham

Ariel Records

Dear Editor,

Having read Frank Andrews' article on John Graves' ARIEL Records, I thought he might be interested to hear that I have one of these which appears to be of G & T origin.

The label states:

ARIEL GRAND RECORD No. 853, Manufactured in England. (There are 6 winged devices and a monogram at 12 o'clock.)

"Is life a boon" Harold Wilde (tenor) (Matrix Ab 15394e) (Side No. 2- 42346)

"I dreamt I dwelt" Harold Wilde (ten) (Matrix Ab 14483e) (Side No. 2-42196)

May have been recorded by Hancox. Was Harold Wilde a pseudonym?

I also have a J. Graves gramophone with a painted metal 'Morning Glory' type horn and a Tresor soundbox. The size is similar to a G & T Monarch Junior, but inferior quality, probably of German manufacture.

Yours sincerely, Eric Whiteway, Exeter

Forthcoming Meetings

London Meetings

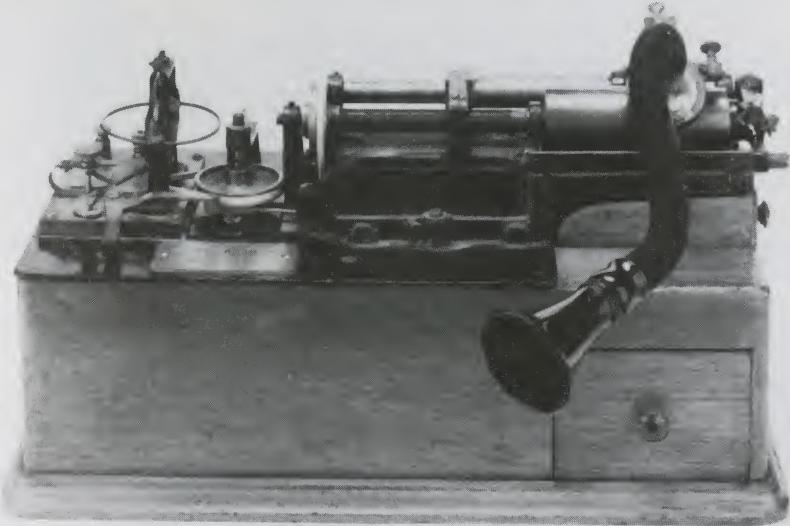
London Meetings are held at The National Sound Archive, 29, Exhibition Road, Kensington, on the third Thursday evening of the month promptly at 7.00pm (unless noted otherwise).

December 19th "The Edison Syncopators" with Paul Collenette.

January 16th "An evening with Howard Hope".

February 20th Len Watts - Full details in next issue.

March 19th "The Gramophone as an Historic Document" with Chris Hamilton.



*An Edison Class M Electric phonograph to be
included in our sale of Mechanical Music on 5 December, 1991
(sale starts at 2.00pm)*

Christie's are currently accepting entries for
their sale of Mechanical Music on 2 April, 1992.
Closing date for entries February 13, 1992.

For further information please contact:
Christopher Proudfoot – [REDACTED]

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